

Minutes  
Meeting of the Subcommittee on Housing Matters  
Public Service and Trust Commission  
Committee on Expectations of the Public  
January 9, 2009  
11:30 PM

Those in attendance: Hon. Robert Beach, Hon. James Bentivegna (chair), and Mr. Richard Tynan.

The meeting was called to order at 11:40 AM.

1. Welcome and Introduction of subcommittee members – Members introduced themselves.
2. Discussion of subcommittee task – The subcommittee discussed its task, including the need to ensure that recommendations and activities would result in measurable results.
3. Review of materials available – Materials available include online frequently asked questions and brochures, forms, and pamphlets and forms in clerks' offices and court service centers.

Discussion of possible approaches – Discussion ensued as to what types of information could and should be provided, ways to provide the information, and what could be done to ensure that the information is helpful to the people it is meant to reach. For example, the language issue is a significant one in Hartford, because of the number of individuals with limited English proficiency. The language issue will be addressed in part by the Committee on Limited English Proficiency but this subcommittee may wish to recommend that materials be provided in other languages. The subcommittee discussed the need to provide materials that would be accessible to people with diverse education and experience. Various possibilities for providing information and assistance were discussed, including having greeters at the courthouses, providing a "Dear Litigant" letter, developing a checklist about the hearing that would go out with a notice of a hearing, suggesting that judges or clerks announce before a recess that the people could come up to the clerk with questions, and preparing an "advisement/announcement" that would be read in court in English and other languages before court begins.

The subcommittee discussed providing any information in several ways: including the advisement and/or letter with the notice of the hearing, providing the information in the courtroom, in the clerk's office, at the court service center, on the Internet, or handing out a brochure to people as they enter the court.

4. Assignment of tasks - After lengthy discussion, the subcommittee member tasks are: Judge Bentivegna will draft an advisement; Mr. Tynan will draft a letter to litigants, and staff and Judge Bentivegna will meet with Atty. Hammer, clerk of the Hartford Housing session to find out information on the housing computer system. The subcommittee will also make recommendations about providing greeters, enhancing interpreter services, and improving signage in courthouses in order to assist people in finding their way around the facilities.
5. Future meetings – The next meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for January 23, 2009 at 11:30 AM in the third floor conference room at 90 Washington St., Hartford.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM.